Powering-up Electronic Media for Child Health Promotion: A Project Developed to Enhance Student Learning of Pediatric Concepts and Child Health Initiatives

An educational project exploring the relationship of electronic media and child health has been developed and implemented in a pediatric nursing course at a technical college. The goal of the project is to assist students in identifying, understanding, and creating ways for nurses to use, change, and maintain electronic media resources to promote and enhance child health.

Teaching Strategies

The pediatric project builds on adult learning principles, is student-centered, and is connected to Healthy People 2010 initiatives (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.). Exploring the influence of media on children for a pediatric assignment and course discussion creates an adult learning environment of inquiry and discovery that is pertinent to personal development, clinical practice, education, and cultural change. Components of the project that allow learners to be self-directed include choices of what media source and age level to explore and which of the resource Web sites provided will be used to gain new knowledge and meet individual learning needs.

Fater (2007) challenged instructors to broaden students’ perspectives about the nursing profession by introducing students to the social contexts of nursing and to initiatives that address health outside of the hospital setting. Healthy People 2010 initiatives related to childhood obesity, physical activity, and adolescent violence and safety are addressed while investigating technology’s influence on these child health issues.

Project Description

The students are introduced to the child development theories of Erikson, Piaget, and Kohlberg, which they use as a framework for determining age appropriateness of the media and influences the media may have on the growth and development of children and parents. The project requires each student to watch and evaluate either two children’s television programs or one children’s television program and a video or computer game or a Web site designated for children.

Two different age groups must be targeted by the two different programs, games, or Web sites evaluated. The age groups are broken into preschool, school-age, or adolescent. Students are encouraged to have a child participate with them during the watching, playing, and evaluating of the media source explored to observe the child’s behavior, comments, and reactions while interacting with the electronic media content and source.

Questions are listed in the project outline given to students to assist in exploring and evaluating the media with regards to age appropriateness, growth and development concepts, meeting of legislation requirements for core educational television or media ratings, beneficial or potentially detrimental health and self-concept aspects, and how media and nursing can work together to influence health care.

Resource Web sites are listed in the project plan for students to explore on their own as needed to complete the project at the detailed level they determine to be sufficient. The student is to prepare an outline-formatted paper to be used for oral discussion in class and to be turned in to the instructor. Grading is based on participation, quality of information presented, creativeness of new ideas for using media to promote children’s health, and written answers exhibiting knowledge gained related to pediatrics and media influences on growth, development, and childhood well-being. The project represents 10% of the student’s total course grade.

Results and Student Responses

This project has been successful in encouraging students to learn pediatric concepts by showing how these concepts can be used in areas outside of a pediatric nursing unit to promote child health. Students also discover answers to questions for continued learning, such as “What is the meaning and significance of this experience or topic to me as a nursing student?” and “How does this give me a different perspective of nursing’s responsibilities?” (Ironside, 2003, p. 126).

References


Gwen Renee Baca, MSN, RN
GRB911@aol.com
Gwinnett Technical College
doi:10.3928/01484834-20100421-02